

Makhaya Makes an Enemy

The next day, Dinorego took Makhaya to Chief Matenge's house. The chief stood on the steps of his house and watched the two men walk towards him.

Makhaya walked slowly, looking at the ground. Chief Matenge was pleased. He thought Makhaya was afraid of him. When Makhaya raised his eyes to look at the chief, Makhaya saw that Matenge was a man without love and without hope.

'Who are you?' Matenge asked in a hard voice.

'Makhaya Maseko,' the young man answered quietly.

'I have been told you are working with Gilbert,' Matenge said. 'He knows nothing about Botswana. He should go back to England. And you must get out too. All the trouble here is caused by refugees like you. When are you leaving?'

'I'm not leaving,' Makhaya replied, as calmly as he could.

'Then I'm going to make things very difficult for you.'

22

You're just a cowardly²⁵ South African dog, running after his master, the white man,' Matenge shouted. Then he turned and walked back into the house.

'Let's go, my son,' Dinorego said quietly. Makhaya looked up at the old man, his eyes full of angry tears.

'Now stay calm, my son,' Dinorego said. 'The Chief has a terrible temper²⁶. One day, it will kill him. Then life will be better in Golema Mmidi.'

'Bad temper isn't going to kill him,' Makhaya said quietly. 'I am.'

'No, no,' Dinorego said quickly. 'You must never, never say that, my son.'

'But that man wants to kill,' Makhaya told him. 'And one day he will kill someone. I'm sure of that.'

'Well, you must be calm,' Dinorego said. 'Then you will be as clever as the Chief!'

Makhaya laughed at this strange answer. His anger had gone and the two men walked back to the farm.

'And now I want you to meet an old friend of mine,' Dinorego said. 'Her name's Mma-Millipede. We come from the same village in the north. We nearly got married when we were young. But a chief wanted to marry her, so we had to forget about marriage. She's alone now and we've stayed good friends all our lives.'

Dinorego left the path. He led Makhaya into a yard full of happy children. An old woman walked slowly towards them.

'Mama, I have brought my new son to see you,' Dinorego said. 'He can't stay long, he's on his way to work.'

Mma-Millipede looked up at Makhaya. Her old face was kind and friendly.

'He's got time for some tea, I'm sure,' said Mma-Millipede.

23



'He's got time for some tea, I'm sure.'

'And I've got some eggs he can take to Gilbert. What do you think of my chickens? That was Gilbert's idea.' And she pointed to the long chicken-yard, where the birds ran about, safe and well.

As they drank the tea, the old woman asked Makhaya a lot of questions. But her questions did not upset him. He felt he had a mother now, as well as a father.

When Makhaya left, the two old people went on talking about him.

'That young man's too handsome,' Mma-Millipede said. 'I hope he's going to behave himself and not make trouble with our women!'

'I thought he might make a good husband for Maria,' Dinorego said. 'What do you think, my friend?'

Mma-Millipede did not answer. She sometimes thought that Gilbert and Maria were in love. But Maria was a difficult child to understand!

A week later, Makhaya got his residence permit. George Appleby-Smith had made sure that the permit arrived as quickly as possible.

When Chief Matenge heard that Makhaya had got his residence permit, he was so angry that he had a heart attack²⁷. He was taken to hospital and told to stay there for a month.

This was a lucky month for the people of Golema Mmidi. With Matenge away, Gilbert and Makhaya were able to get on with their new plans. Golema Mmidi would never be the same again!

25